United Nations E/AC.51/2012/4

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 April 2012

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination
Fifty-second session
Substantive session, 4-29 June 2012
Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Programme questions: evaluation

Triennial review of the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its forty-ninth session on the evaluation of United Nations support for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and Africa

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The present report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) is submitted in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its twenty-second session to review the implementation of its recommendations three years after taking decisions on evaluations submitted to the Committee. This triennial review determined whether the two recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination on United Nations support for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and Africa had been implemented.

OIOS, in its original evaluation (E/AC.51/2009/2), assessed the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In the report, OIOS indicated that the main achievement of the two programmes was their contribution to heightened policy attention to the special development needs of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and Africa at global forums convened by the United Nations. It called for a proposal to be formulated by the programme of United Nations system support for NEPAD to strengthen support for the regional consultative mechanism for Africa.

* E/AC.51/2012/1.

12-28174 (E) 090412

Please recycle

The Committee, at its forty-ninth session, agreed with certain findings of OIOS, specifically the misalignment between expectations, capacities and accountability arrangements, the need for enhanced coordination and the potential for a better-formulated framework for strategic planning and monitoring.

OIOS considers the recommendation that the Secretary-General ensure coordination and synergy in the area of overlap between the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa to be in progress, as a number of initiatives have been undertaken to ensure coordination and synergy between the offices. Opportunities for combining resources and expertise have been explored in a recently concluded exercise, but the pilot initiative to consolidate offices has been abandoned, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions.

Regarding the recommendation that the Secretary-General provide an update regarding the filling of the position of Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa, OIOS considers it to have been implemented, as the Secretary-General announced the appointment of Maged Abdelaziz (Egypt) as his Special Adviser on Africa on 8 March 2012.

I. Introduction

1. At its forty-ninth session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Inspection and Evaluation Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the evaluation of United Nations support for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and Africa (E/AC.51/2009/2).

2. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the report and agreed with certain findings in it, specifically the misalignment between expectations, capacities and accountability arrangements, the need for enhanced coordination and the potential for better formulated framework for strategic planning and monitoring. Two recommendations were made by the Committee in its report (A/64/16).

3. The objective of this triennial review was to present the status of implementation of the two recommendations made by the Committee.

4. The methodology for the triennial review included: (a) a review and analysi of progress reports on the status of recommendations that are periodically monitored through the OIOS Issue Track database; (b) an analysis of relevant information, documents and reports obtained from the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the office for regional coordination and support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), implemented by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the office for public information and awareness activities in support of NEPAD, implemented by the Department of Public Information; and (c) interviews with relevant managers and staff in the two offices.

II. Results

5. OIOS found that some progress had been made in the implementation of recommendation 1 but that the recommendation had not yet been fully implemented. In respect of recommendation 2, OIOS considers the recommendation to be fully implemented. The implementation status of each recommendation is presented below.

> **Recommendation 1: The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure coordination and synergy in the area of overlap between the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser in order to achieve results in the most effective way.**

6. OIOS considers this recommendation to be in progress, as there have been a number of collaborative initiatives but no formal coordination mechanism is yet in place. However, areas where overlap may exist and opportunities for greater cohesion and collaboration and for combining resources and expertise have been explored in a recently concluded exercise. Moreover, beyond the two offices themselves, some coordination with ECA and the Department of Public Information under the subprogrammes providing United Nations support to NEPAD is ongoing and will be further addressed.

7. In 2008, the Secretary-General realigned, on an experimental basis, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, responsible for United Nations support for NEPAD, and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. The High Representative, at the Under-Secretary-General level, assumed the added responsibilities of the Special Adviser. Both offices have mandates to sustain international support through advocacy, service intergovernmental forums and coordinate and mobilize system-wide follow-up to policy frameworks with regard to their respective areas of responsibility. The realignment initiated by the Secretary-General sought to reinforce advocacy efforts and promote greater inter-agency coordination and donor contact to mobilize support for programmes dedicated to Africa's development and to the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. It also sought to streamline operations and eliminate duplication and overlap between the two offices (see A/66/6 (Sect. 10), para. 10.9).

8. Following up on the outcome of the realignment, the Secretary-General initiated an assessment of the impact of the realignment on both offices with the aim of determining the programme and section configuration, design and mandates that could be considered by the General Assembly. A consultant was hired to identify areas of overlap between the two offices and to assess the extent of cooperation in the preparation and convening of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul from 9 to 13 May 2011. In addition, other instances in which the two offices collaborated, such as in convening panel discussions on the impact of the international economic crisis on Africa and the least developed countries, were looked at. In its report, OIOS observed that of the 53 African countries covered by the Office of the Special Adviser, 37 (70 per cent) were also covered under one or more programmes of the Office of the High Representative (E/AC.51/2009/2, para. 41). Conversely, more than one third of the 90 countries covered by the Office of the High Representative were in Africa.

9. A draft report was prepared identifying areas of common interest where synergies could be created and coordination could be enhanced to promote efficiency. However, in the light of General Assembly resolutions 64/243, 65/244 and 66/8, in which the Assembly endorsed the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, that the vacant post of Special Adviser on Africa be filled at the legislatively mandated level of Under-Secretary-General, the Secretary-General decided to abandon the idea of unifying the two offices. In December 2011, the Secretary-General announced his intention to appoint an Under-Secretary-General to lead the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa.

10. Owing to the change in focus, the report was never finalized, although areas where the two offices could channel their resources for better efficiency had been explored. Given the unique situation in which both offices were led by the same Under-Secretary-General, opportunities for coordination and synergy existed, although they were not formalized. OIOS was informed that upon the appointment of the Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa, the two offices would establish a more formal mechanism to ensure coordination and synergy in the areas of overlap. The following examples of coordination between the two offices were provided to OIOS:

(a) In June 2010, the two offices, along with the United Nations Development Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Peacebuilding Support Office, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, organized a thematic discussion on the role of women in countries in special situations;

(b) The two offices collaborated in various high-level events held during sessions of the Economic and Social Council on issues related to Africa and the least developed countries. In July 2010, the two offices, along with the United Nations Development Fund for Women, organized a ministerial round-table breakfast on the theme "Economic opportunities for the empowerment of women in Africa and least developed countries: access to credit, land and markets". In 2011, they organized a ministerial round-table breakfast on the gender dimension of education in post-conflict countries in Africa and least developed countries;

(c) At the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the Office of the Special Adviser collaborated with the Office of the High Representative in the preparation and actual hosting of the Conference. The former coordinated the six high-level interactive thematic debates;

(d) The Office of the High Representative convened United Nations agencies and a number of Member States and experts to a brainstorming meeting on the way forward for the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in New York in June 2011. A representative from the Office of the Special Adviser also participated in the meeting;

(e) The Office of the High Representative organized an inter-agency consultative group meeting on the theme "Launching the preparatory process for the comprehensive ten-year review conference of the Almaty Programme of Action" in New York in February 2012 in which three members from the Office of the Special Adviser participated.

11. With regard to the progress in the implementation of and support for NEPAD, the Office of the Special Adviser, ECA and the Department of Public Information are working on the modalities of a joint strategic planning exercise to enhance coordination mechanisms to respond effectively to Africa's development needs and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Informal consultations are ongoing. While formal meetings have not started, discussions by videoconference between the three entities are ongoing. It is anticipated that some tangible outputs of the joint planning exercise will be finalized in 2012.

12. The structure of the operational framework to provide United Nations support for NEPAD at the global, regional and country levels was strengthened through the reconfiguration of the regional coordination mechanism. A joint United Nations-African Union secretariat has been established. United Nations agencies and other organizations working in Africa have been organized into thematic clusters established around the priority areas of NEPAD. There has also been an improvement in coordination within and between clusters. The Office of the Special Adviser, along with the Directorate of Information and Communication of the African Union Commission, convenes and co-chairs the advocacy and communication cluster, of which the Department of Public Information is an active member. ECA coordinates the infrastructure development cluster. United Nations agencies working in Africa hold periodic coordination meetings at the headquarters

of ECA. To commemorate the tenth anniversary of NEPAD, the Office of the Special Adviser, jointly with the Department of Public Information and ECA and in collaboration with the Commission and the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency of the African Union, organized a week of high-level events at United Nations Headquarters in October 2011.

13. The Inter-Agency Task Force on Africa, convened by the Office of the Special Adviser, is another coordination mechanism used to support the implementation of the NEPAD priorities. This mechanism continues to provide an effective framework for all entities of the United Nations system to share expertise and lessons learned and to coordinate efforts and resources. In the preparation of the annual reports of the Secretary-General to the Committee for Programme and Coordination and to the General Assembly on progress in the implementation of NEPAD, the Office of the Special Adviser has benefited greatly from the collaboration and contribution of all United Nations entities through the Task Force. In addition, the Task Force collaborated on and contributed to the report on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/65/152-S/2010/526), prepared by the Office of the Special Adviser.

14. The Office of the Special Adviser is often called upon to answer questions and provide information to such bodies as the General Assembly, the Fifth Committee, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Committee for Programme and Coordination on various topics. Information and feedback are then sought from ECA and the Department of Public Information. Once consensus is reached on the issues, the Office of the Special Adviser represents the two other offices at meetings.

15. On 8 March 2012, the Secretary-General announced the appointment of Maged Abdelaziz (Egypt) as his Special Adviser on Africa. OIOS has been advised that with that appointment, a platform will be established for the Office of the Special Adviser and the Office of the High Representative to coordinate the expertise in their specific areas and better support the countries they represent in meeting the challenges and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. OIOS has also been assured that the appointment will open the dialogue for extensive consultations on the governance of the three subprogrammes that provide support to NEPAD.

Recommendation 2: The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide an update regarding the filling of the position of Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa in the context of his next report on the New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support.

16. The post of Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa was advertised in December 2011 along with seven other Under-Secretary-General posts. The permanent missions of Member States were requested to nominate candidates for the eight Under-Secretary-General posts by 6 January 2012.

17. The Committee stressed the urgent need to fill the position of Special Adviser on Africa and recommended that the General Assembly reiterate its request to the Secretary-General to do so as a matter of priority by 31 December 2009 (A/64/16, para. 57). The Secretary-General was asked to provide an update on the filling of the

post in his next report on NEPAD. OIOS reviewed the eighth and ninth consolidated progress reports on the implementation of and international support for NEPAD (A/65/167 and A/66/202) and found no mention of the filling of the position.

18. With the announcement of the selection of the Special Adviser, OIOS considers this recommendation to have been implemented.

III. Conclusion

19. Since the issuance of the report of OIOS in April 2009 and the adoption of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination in July 2009, the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser have been working closely to fulfil their common agenda of supporting the countries they represent in meeting their challenges and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. During the past three years, both offices were led by the same Under-Secretary-General, which presented more opportunities for coordination, although they were informal. Upon the appointment of the Special Adviser on Africa, it is anticipated that further measures will be put in place to ensure coordination between the two offices and their partners in the United Nations system.

(*Signed*) Carman L. **Lapointe**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services

2 April 2012

Annex

Comments from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General

In the present annex, the Office of Internal Oversight Services presents the full text of the comments of the Deputy Secretary-General on the triennial review of the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its forty-ninth session on the evaluation of United Nations support to the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and Africa.[a]

1. I write in reference to your memorandum dated 7 March 2012 on the above draft report. This is to confirm that the Executive Office of the Secretary-General does not have further comments except to advise that, with regard to recommendation 2 by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), it can be confirmed that on 8 March 2012, the Secretary-General announced the appointment of Mr. Maged Abdelaziz of Egypt as his Special Adviser on Africa.

2. That announcement is attached to this note and may also be accessed at the following link: http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/sga1331.doc.htm.

3. Therefore, it is the view of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General that OIOS propose to the CPC that the relevant recommendation be considered as closed.

(*Signed*) Asha-Rose **Migiro**

23 March 2012

[a] This practice was instituted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/263, following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.